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STATE FOR D, P, EAP/MLS; GENEVA FOR RMA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AORC](#) [PHUM](#) [CB](#)
SUBJECT: CAMBODIA'S FM ON APEC, BURMA, AND
VENEZUELA/GUATEMALA

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Margaret B. McKean; Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)
)

¶1. (C) Summary. During Ambassador's April 5 meeting with FM Hor Namhong, the FM raised the prospect of APEC membership, PM Hun Sen's desire to participate in the November APEC Summit meeting in Hanoi as part of the ASEAN leaders' meeting with President Bush, and the FM's interest in meeting with Secretary Rice either in New York at the September UNGA meetings or in Washington during the same time period. The Ambassador pressed the FM on Guatemala's candidacy for the Latin American seat on the UNSC and tougher ASEAN action on Burma, and informed the FM of DAS John's upcoming visit to Cambodia. End Summary.

Cambodia/U.S. Bilateral Relations, APEC, Burma and Guatemala

¶2. (C) On April 5, the Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Hor Namhong, noting that he would be leaving for the States at mid-month and would be discussing Cambodia's bilateral relationship in Washington. He noted that the positive political developments of the first quarter augured well for further development of more productive relations between the two countries. The FM agreed, saying that Cambodia wants to improve understanding between the two countries as well. He said that of primary interest to Cambodia is APEC membership, adding that Cambodia has asked Vietnam to raise the issue at the APEC Summit in Hanoi in November. The Ambassador noted USG concerns with lifting the membership moratorium, but he agreed to report the issue to Washington. FM Hor Namhong said that Prime Minister Hun Sen will join the other ASEAN leaders in Hanoi and would welcome the opportunity for a pull-aside or bilateral meeting at that time. For his part, the FM said he would be interested in visiting Washington to meet with Secretary Rice in September when the UNGA meetings are taking place.

¶3. (C) Turning to Burma, the Ambassador pointed to continuing USG frustration with Burma over the political stalemate in Rangoon and lack of progress towards democracy. Hor Namhong echoed the Ambassador's concern, saying that ASEAN leaders uniformly share the frustration as evidenced at last year's Summit in Kuala Lumpur. The FM noted that even Vietnam, which previously had not been very forthcoming on the subject, has moved closer in line with other ASEAN leaders on the subject of Burma. He said that the Malaysian FM would provide a readout of his recent visit to Burma at the April 18-19 ASEAN FM's retreat in Bali, but indicated that Cambodia is disappointed with the visit, and

characterized it as a "failure." Than Shwe holds all the power and Hamid was unable to meet with him, he continued; the political leaders have no influence nor does Rangoon's military junta listen to them. The FM said that Burma would also be discussed later in the year at the leaders' meeting in the Philippines. He added that Burma is not simply an issue of concern to ASEAN member states because of its being out of step with other ASEAN countries, but also because of ASEAN's image. The Ambassador mused about the possibility of suspending Burma's membership in the regional body if all else fails; the FM made no comment.

14. (C) The Ambassador noted USG interest in Cambodian support for Guatemala as a candidate for the rotating Latin American seat at the UNSC. He outlined the reasons for considering Guatemala's candidacy over that of Venezuela, mentioning Venezuela's disruptive behavior at recent international fora. He added that the Embassy was aware that Cambodia had already been approached on behalf of Venezuela and perhaps had promised to support Venezuela's candidacy. The FM said he was not aware of any RGC commitment to support Venezuela, and would verify what has taken place concerning this issue. However, he indicated that Cambodia must consider seriously the USG's request regarding Guatemala's candidacy.

DAS John Visit

15. (C) The Ambassador said that EAP DAS Eric John would be visiting the region at the end of April, and would be coming to Cambodia in the April 30-May 2 timeframe. Although the Ambassador will not be in country at the time, he said that the Embassy would be submitting a request for a meeting and hoped the FM would be available. Hor Namhong said he was planning to travel to Canada in May, but thought he would be

in Cambodia at that time. If he is present, the FM offered to host a dinner. The FM also expressed his hope that DAS John would have the opportunity to see Angkor Wat and visit Siem Reap during his stay in Cambodia. The Ambassador offered that there may not be enough time to schedule a side trip to Siem Reap.

Comment

16. (C) We will continue to look for ways that Cambodia can be helpful on Burma, although it appears that ASEAN -- while increasingly frustrated with Burmese intransigence -- does not yet seem willing to entertain more forceful measures (e.g., suspension). We plan to revisit the issue of Guatemala with the MFA to ascertain if their position on Venezuela has changed in the aftermath of the Ambassador's intervention with the FM. The FM's interest in ensuring a successful DAS John visit was genuine. End Comment.
Mussomeli